

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 025994
ORIGIN INR-07

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 025994

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PEPR, IN

SUBJECT: HORN OF AFRICA: PRESIDENTIAL LETTER TO PRIME
MINISTER

1. PLEASE DELIVER TO PRIME MINISTER TEXT OF LETTER FROM
PRESIDENT CARTER DATED JANUARY 31, QUOTED BELOW. SIGNED
ORIGINAL BEING POUCHED.

2. IN CONVEYING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, PLEASE ALSO INFORM
PRIME MINISTER OF FOLLOWING ON SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITY IN THE
RED SEA AREA: DRAWING UPON AN ENLARGED SOVIET INDIAN OCEAN
SQUADRON, WHICH REACHED A LEVEL OF 25-30 VESSELS IN LATE
JANUARY, THE SOVIETS HAVE CREATED A SIZABLE NAVAL PRESENCE
IN THE RED SEA AREA. (BEFORE LAST DECEMBER, SOVIET SHIPS
OCCASIONALLY VISITED THE RED SEA, BUT NOT IN SIGNIFICANT
NUMBERS, NOR FOR LONG STAYS.) THE SOVIET CONTINGENT NOW IN
THE RED SEA-ADEN-GULF OF ADEN AREA CONSISTS OF ABOUT A
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DOZEN OR MORE VESSELS, INCLUDING LARGE TANK LANDING SHIPS,
DEPOT OR REPAIR-SALVAGE SHIPS, TANKERS, AND FIVE COMBATANTS,
RANGING IN SIZE FROM A DESTROYER DOWN TO SMALL FRIGATES.

THIS SOVIET NAVAL FORCE SEEMS CLEARLY DESIGNED TO PROVIDE
SUPPORT TO, OR TRANSPORT FOR, THE ETHIOPIAN TROOPS FIGHTING
IN THE HORN. IN PARTICULAR, THE SOVIET FORCE APPEARS TO BE

INVOLVED IN SHUTTling SUPPLIES BETWEEN ASSAB AND THE BELEAGUERED PORT OF MASSAWA, AND IN MOVING MATERIEL FROM ADEN TO ETHIOPIAN PORTS. THE SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IS COMPLETELY OUT OF PROPORTION TO OTHER COUNTRIES' NAVAL FORCES CURRENTLY IN THE AREA.

3. BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. PRIME MINISTER:

DURING OUR DISCUSSIONS IN NEW DELHI WE SPENT SOME TIME TALKING ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. I THINK WE WERE IN FULL AGREEMENT THAT OUTSIDE POWERS SHOULD NOT INTERFERE IN THIS SITUATION. CERTAINLY BOTH INDIA AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE SCRUPULOUSLY REFRAINED FROM BECOMING INVOLVED MILITARILY ON EITHER SIDE. WE DESIRE A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT, ON THE BASIS OF INDEPENDENCE, TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, THE NONINVOLVEMENT OF FOREIGN FORCES, AND INCLUDING A FAIR RESOLUTION OF THE ERITREAN CONFLICT IN A MANNER ACCEPTABLE TO ETHIOPIA.

I WRITE NOW TO EXPRESS MY GROWING CONCERN AT THE TURN THAT EVENTS HAVE TAKEN SINCE OUR MEETING. INFORMATION IS REACHING US THAT HEAVY SHIPMENTS OF WEAPONS AND MILITARY
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PERSONNEL ARE BEING SENT TO ETHIOPIA AND LARGE NUMBERS OF ADDITIONAL CUBAN TROOPS ARE EXPECTED SOON AND MAY ENTER ACTIVE FIGHTING. THIS SCALE OF SOVIET AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT NOW THREATENS TO TRANSFORM THIS CONFLICT INTO ONE WITH BROADER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS.

GIVEN INDIA'S POSITION IN THE NONALIGNED MOVEMENT, ITS RELATIONS WITH THE USSR AND ITS CONCERN FOR STABILITY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION, I WOULD DEEPLY APPRECIATE IT IF YOU COULD SEE YOUR WAY CLEAR TO RAISING THIS MATTER WITH THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS. WE DO NOT ARGUE AGAINST LEGITIMATE SOVIET AND CUBAN RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA OR WITH ANY OTHER COUNTRY. WE DO, HOWEVER, WANT TO PREVENT THE RESURGENCE OF GREAT POWER COMPETITION IN A REGION WHERE IT HAS IN RECENT YEARS BEEN ON THE WANE. OUTSIDE INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONFLICT IN THE HORN SHOULD BE AIMED TO REDUCE, NOT EXACERBATE, BASIC TENSIONS IN THE AREA. ALSO, FRANKLY, WE WANT TO AVOID A SITUATION IN WHICH OUR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION BECOME SO EMBITTERED THAT WE ARE UNABLE TO MAKE PROGRESS ON SUCH PRESSING ISSUES AS NUCLEAR ARMS REDUCTION, ABOUT WHICH YOU HAVE SPOKEN SO ELOQUENTLY.

I WOULD PERSONALLY BE MOST GRATEFUL FOR ANY STEPS THAT INDIA MIGHT TAKE TO AVERT A SITUATION THAT IS IN NOBODY'S INTEREST--INCLUDING, I BELIEVE, THE LONG-RANGE INTEREST OF THE SOVIET UNION. EQUALLY, I WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ADVICE THAT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO GIVE ME ON HOW THE UNITED STATES AND ITS FRIENDS MIGHT BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE MOST EFFECTIVELY TO THE PEACE AND STABILITY OF THIS REGION.

WITH WARM PERSONAL REGARDS,

SINCERELY, JIMMY CARTER END TEXT

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